



Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
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RIVER OTTER SEASON WILL CLOSE NOVEMBER 17

According to river otter tagging records, the goal of harvesting 400 harvested river otters was reached on November 14. In order to allow trappers to check their traps and report for any otters taken after November 14, the Iowa DNR will allow any otters taken during the next 72 hours to be tagged legally. Therefore the season will officially close at 6 p.m., November 17. Any otters trapped after that must be turned into the Iowa DNR. Trappers who have obtained their seasonal quota of 2 otters are not allowed to legally take any additional otters during this grace period.

Ron Andrews, fur resource specialist with the DNR, encourages trappers do a little trap line management of their own to eliminate or reduce their potential capture of river otters. "The obvious thing to do is to move to areas where there is very little river otter sign present. If you are trapping for raccoon, adjust the set so that they are not exactly on the common trails that many furbearers travel. Use lure that might be more attractive to raccoons and less attractive to otters. If you catch a live otter you can carefully remove the otter from the trap and release it," Andrews said.

A 4-foot by 4-foot notched plywood board can protect the trapper from being injured by the otter. A diagram of this board can be found on the iowadnr.com website. Beaver trappers using body clasp Conibear type traps can reduce the take of otters by sliding the trigger mechanism off the side of the trap.

"It is important that trappers realize that they are the key to future river otter harvest seasons in Iowa," Andrews said. "Trapper cooperation is critical when it comes

to carcass collections of legally harvested otters. If they do not step up to the plate, and make every effort to cooperate, the future of river otter trapping in Iowa could be in jeopardy.” Data collected from these animals is critical to securing permission from the Fish and Wildlife Service for future seasons. Data collected from incidentally harvested otters now that the season has closed is equally important.

This is Iowa’s first ever regulated river otter harvest season. Andrews encourages trappers to work closely with the Iowa DNR to help sustain river otter populations and maintain future river otter harvesting opportunities in the state.

For questions or more information call Ron Andrews at 641-425-5088.

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When It Comes To Searching For Monster Whitetails, Legendary Athlete BO JACKSON Chooses North Iowa As The Place To Be BO HUNTING

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

RICEVILLE---When fall hunting seasons roll around, sports legend Bo Jackson can literally go anywhere in the world. Although he loves to pursue waterfowl, turkey, and upland birds, Jackson's greatest outdoor passion is hunting for big game with bow and arrow. From elk to bear, 'gators to javelina, Bo and his bow have seen and done it all.

Although now retired from professional sports, Jackson still refers to his play book before hitting the field. But these days his strategies for success are focused on white-tailed deer rather than touch downs or home runs. That's why, when it came time for a three-day November deer hunt, Jackson considered all the possibilities and then chose North Iowa as the place to be.

"I'd been hearing about Iowa's giant white-tails for a long time," said Jackson. "Although I'd had invitations and wanted to hunt deer in Iowa for more than ten years, this was the very first opportunity I had to actually come here.

"When I learned that I'd been fortunate enough to receive a [nonresident] deer tag, I dropped everything and immediately rearranged my schedule," he added.

After a decade of anticipation, Jackson's first ever Iowa hunt took place last week on the Jennison Family Farm, near Riceville. Accompanying him on the outing was friend and avid bow hunter Martin Bruder, of Lakeville, Minn., and host Mark Elliott, of Osage. DNR conservation officer and deer hunting expert, Ken Lonneman volunteered to serve as hunt coordinator.

As Jackson climbed into his tree stand during the first evening of the hunt, he immediately became aware that stories concerning the size of Iowa whitetails were no exaggeration. At the approach of sunset, large numbers of deer began moving along the maze of woodland trails surrounding his stand. After watching the animals for more than an hour Jackson picked his target, bent the bow, and successfully harvested his first Iowa whitetail --- a hefty mature doe.

Less than 200 yards down the trail, things were going even better for hunting buddy Martin Bruder who carefully took aim to arrow an impressive buck during his first trip to the stand.

"It was incredible," said Jackson. "Martin and I each harvested a deer at about the same time during the very first day of our hunt.

"These [Iowa] deer are giants. I started hunting deer in my home state of Alabama during the early 1980s. The doe I took here in Iowa this week was bigger than any buck I've seen in Alabama."

But it was Bruder's deer that really took Jackson's eye. A fully mature, ten-point typical, the buck green scored at 150 points [based on the Pope & Young measuring standard].

"That deer is the kind I've been hearing about," said Jackson.

"I'd have to say that Martin shot the buck I came to Iowa for," he laughed.

In spite of his attraction to giant bucks, Jackson hunts as much for the table as he does for antlers. As proficient in the kitchen as in the woods, his home freezer is well stocked with wild game. In addition to ample stores of venison, the family larder includes duck, elk, and ornyx.

"When on a hunt, I like to do all my own work," says Jackson. "I don't really like to have people do things for me. If I am fortunate enough to harvest a deer, then I think it's my job to drag it out of the woods and process [cut it up] myself."

After skinning and butchering his deer, Jackson processes a portion of his venison into summer sausage, jerky, etc. Many of the cuts are shared with family and friends or with those less fortunate.

Although Jackson could have legally bagged two Iowa deer, that mature doe was the only animal he chose to take. He did, however, have several opportunities to shoot does and smaller bucks while spending three more "sits" in the stand. He declined, noting that he'd leave them for next time. "I've already harvested plenty of smaller bucks," he noted.

"I met some great people and had a lot of fun here. This was really a great first trip to Iowa," said Jackson. "I am very satisfied with what I've seen here and hope to be back hunting deer in Iowa at this same time next year."

Side Bar

Heissman Trophy winner Bo Jackson is one of only a handful of athletes to ever achieve successful careers in both the NFL and major league baseball. Officially retiring from professional sports in 1995, Jackson now devotes much of his leisure time to hunting big game with bow and arrow. Currently engaged in nationwide speaking tours and numerous private business ventures, he admits to spending much less time in the outdoors than he would prefer.

"One of the things I'm very involved with is a company that supplies the military with food items like bacon, beef, and chicken ---- mainly to our troops in the Middle-East," said Jackson.

When talking with Jackson, it soon becomes apparent that he has a deep seated admiration and respect for our American service men and women. He has personally made two visits to Kuwait, and during each of the past three years has spent Super Bowl week with U.S. troops stationed in the Middle East.

"I try to visit at least a dozen or more bases during Super Bowl week," says Jackson. "We just go in and sit down and really take time to visit with the troops. They are such great people and really appreciate anything you do for them. Spending time with them and looking at what's going on over there really makes you sit back and think about all that we have at home and how much we take for granted."

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DON'T BRING OUT OF STATE FIREWOOD TO IOWA

By Mark Shour

Extension Entomologist

Iowa State University

During the next few months, deer, turkey and other hunters will be working fields and forests across Iowa in pursuit of game, and many hunters will use campfires for meal preparation or for socializing after the hunt.

As a courtesy and contribution to the state's welfare, hunters are being asked to leave firewood at home and buy firewood locally once they reach their destination. This effort will save our state millions of dollars in potential containment and cleanup activities by keeping exotic pests, like the emerald ash borer and gypsy moth, out of Iowa.

Forestry experts in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois are battling the emerald ash borer, a tiny, emerald-green, invasive beetle with a seemingly insatiable appetite for ash trees (*Fraxinus* species). Since its discovery in 2002 in Detroit, Mich., the insect has killed more than 20 million ash trees in the affected states. Iowa has about 50 million ash trees in forested areas and another 10 million ashes in urban areas. Introduction of emerald ash borer to Iowa would result in potentially overwhelming costs to local, county, and state economies, as well as to Iowa citizens.

People have unwittingly been moving this destructive pest in firewood and other ash products with bark attached; any hopes of containing this pest reside in stopping artificial movement of the pest. Many Midwestern states are either banning out of state firewood, or requesting visitors to buy local firewood.

Another invasive insect, the gypsy moth, is well known in Eastern states for defoliating host trees. Yearly monitoring efforts in Iowa have been effective in detecting isolated areas and then eliminating the pest where it was introduced. Fortunately, gypsy moth is not established in Iowa and its pheromone trap numbers have been low in the past few years. However, this pest's egg masses will hitchhike out of infested states on firewood, nursery plants, recreational vehicles, lawn furniture, and other items. Once hatched, gypsy moth caterpillars feed voraciously on oaks and hundreds of other tree species, often defoliating their host.

A multi-agency task force has been looking for exotic pests over the course of several years. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Forestry Bureau, U.S. Department of Agriculture – Plant Protection Quarantine service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and Iowa State University Extension have focused on emerald ash borer and sudden oak death (a new disease pest) surveillance in the past two years, yet continue to monitor for gypsy moth and other potentially harmful invasive species.

To review the Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan, go to <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/PME/home/pests/IA%20EAB%20Plan%206-06.pdf>

To find out more information about the emerald ash borer, go to <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>

For more information about this project, contact:

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COLD WEATHER IS FOR THE BIRDS

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

It doesn't take long to attract a crowd. Full birdfeeders, a cold day...and the backyard fills up in a hurry.

I usually keep a couple feeders stocked through most of the year; niger thistle for finches and sunflower seeds for several other summer nesters. With a busy fall, though, I neglected them until it got cold and rainy last week. Since all were empty, I scrubbed them and rearranged a couple. Within minutes, the first visitor was there: a sapsucker at the wire tube feeder, picking out 'fresh Missouri' pecans (demoted from the pantry after insects proved them not as 'fresh' as their roadside stand billing). Within a couple days, goldfinches, chickadees, cardinals and sparrows had the place staked out and I was a regular stop again.

With legions of bird feeders out there (the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service says 878,000 Iowans feed or watch birds), your feeding stations are used by songbirds and clinging birds (woodpeckers, flickers, etc.) as they migrate south, or by those who decide that your yard is 'south enough'. They set up feeding circuits; natural food sources and well-stocked feeders in the neighborhood. Yours is not their only winter lifeline. Should you take a few days off, it is not going to harm the birds. It will just take a few days to re-acquaint them, once you return.

What to feed them? It depends on which species you want to attract. "Black oil sunflower seed attracts the widest variety of desirable winter birds, and minimizes waste from some of the seed mixes," offers Pat Schlarbaum, Department of Natural Resources wildlife technician.

Winter cardinals flock to the high fat sunflower seeds. So do nuthatches, titmice, bluejays and chickadees. The hull-less sunflower chips even lure goldfinches away from the thistle. Beyond sunflower (safflower if you want to deter squirrels), peanuts, suet and thistle seed are great choices for a variety of species that will provide an outdoor show when the winter winds and snow fly.

And as birds flock to our feeders, we are flocking to the birding supply centers. "We are definitely seeing folks coming in who are wintertime feeders," notes Ronda Wilson, owner of the 'Birds Eye View' store in Coralville. "We are selling a lot of

safflower seed to people who want to discourage house sparrows, starlings and squirrels; which tend not to like safflower.”

For whatever reason, birdfeeding—and bird *watching*—captivate many of us. It’s relatively cheap to participate. There’s no license to buy or season to observe. You do have to slog through the snow once in awhile to restock feeders. You’re rewarded, however, with hours of full color entertainment, against that white backdrop. “It’s a chance to enjoy their beauty, to see their feeding habits,” offers Schlarbaum. “Chickadees hold the seeds between their toes. Nuthatches look for a place to wedge it. It’s just a great way for families to enjoy a connection to the great outdoors.”

And those humans feeding the birds are selective, too. “People realize now that with the proper seed and feeder selection, they can attract target species,” explains Wilson. “More and more, people are using a variety of feeds; like a blend of peanuts and almonds to attract woodpeckers, chickadees, tufted titmice and nuthatches.”

With all those bird feeding Iowans out there, that’s a lot of seed to pack away through the winter season.

Bird Friendly Yard

***provide water**, especially in subfreezing temperatures. A heating element in a birdbath is essential during cold weather

***provide habitat**. A few bushes nearby offer perches and protection from the wind. A ninebark bush outside our kitchen window often holds ten or 12 cardinals on cold, snowy days.

***keep it clean**. Disinfect feeders before and after the busy winter season

***keep it cat free**. Birdfeeders are a buffet line for wandering felines. If it’s your cat, keep it indoors. If it’s a neighbor’s, see if you can work out a compromise.

***outsmart invaders**. If grackles or sparrows move in, try scattering cheaper seed in a corner of the yard; ‘a big sparrow magnet’, advises Wilson. Squirrels? Invest in feeders with ‘guards’. Wilson also sees a lot of interest in a new, sparrow-discouraging tube feeder this fall.

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IOWA DNR CONTINUES TO TEST DEER FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Wildlife biologists with the Department of Natural Resources are again testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) from deer harvested in Iowa. And, again, hunters are being asked for their help; particularly in northeast Iowa. Biologists want to take 500 samples from each of six Mississippi River counties to bolster their data.

CWD is a neurological disease, caused by 'prions' --abnormal proteins that eat into the brains of infected deer and elk. In later stages, an affected animal is disoriented, lethargic, emaciated; essentially 'wasting' away. It is always fatal. "Even though no positive cases have appeared in Iowa, it is still important to test for it," stresses DNR wildlife biologist Mike Griffin. "CWD has shown up in Illinois and Wisconsin. We need to guard against it here."

Most samples will be taken from animals harvested during Iowa's December 2-6 and 9-17 shotgun deer seasons in northeast Iowa. Hunters are asked to call 563-357-6276 (for Scott, Clinton, Jackson, Dubuque County deer), 563-920-4217 (Clayton County) or 563-380-3422 (Allamakee County) to report where harvested deer can be found and tested. Roving crews will take samples from the heads of harvested deer during the shotgun deer seasons; a more effective method than asking hunters to transport deer to check stations. Those crews will go on location, to hanging sheds or in the field to minimize inconvenience to hunters. It takes just a few minutes to obtain lymph node and spinal cord sample. Only deer over 18 months of age can be tested successfully.

"Our target is 500 animals each from Scott, Clinton, Jackson, Dubuque, Clayton and Allamakee counties," explains Griffin. "We are especially watchful along that stretch of the Mississippi River that borders Illinois and Wisconsin. If CWD would spread, it is reasonable to believe it would be in that vicinity." Two more Wisconsin deer tested positive last year.

While emphasizing that no deer have tested 'positive' for CWD, Griffin urges hunters *not* to ignore the call for samples. "We have seen some apathy develop among the hunting public," he cautions. "We are doing this for the hunters. Hunting could be devastated in some areas, if it ever appears." Since 2000, more than 16,500 samples have been examined. Testing is underway already this fall, on deer from bow and early muzzleloader seasons and from road kills. Besides the target counties in northeast Iowa, a smaller number of samples are taken from other counties across Iowa.

Health officials emphasize that even though CWD is fatal among deer and elk, it has not been shown to spread to humans. To reduce contact in any case, hunters are encouraged to use rubber gloves when field dressing deer. And while domestic livestock can develop similar diseases (ie; 'mad cow' disease) CWD has not been shown to spread from deer and elk to cattle.

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HARDWOOD TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT AVAILABLE THIS FALL

AMES - Falling leaves not only signal changing seasons, but it also signals a great time to plant native trees and shrubs for establishing critical wildlife cover. The

State Forest Nursery in Ames is offering low cost conservation seedlings of hardy hardwood trees and shrubs for fall planting.

“Fall is an outstanding time to plant, the warm days, cool nights and adequate moisture allows some root growth before the coming of winter –giving the trees and shrubs ahead start for the spring,” said John Walkowiak, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources forestry bureau. “Native hardwood trees and shrubs can be successfully established this fall until the ground freeze.”

The State Forest Nursery has 27 hardwood tree and 15 shrub species for sale as bare root conservation seedlings in two sizes – 6 to 16 inches tall and 17 to 24 inches tall.

Tree seedlings available include native oaks such as black, bur, chinkapin, red, swamp white and white, along with silver and sugar maple, sycamore, river birch, black cherry and walnut. Shrub seedlings available include arrowwood, buttonbush, chokecherry, dogwood, elderberry, hazelnut, highbush cranberry, nannyberry, ninebark, and wild plum.

Conservation seedlings are sold in units of 100 at prices ranging from \$40 to \$45 per 100 seedlings. There is a minimum order of 500 seedlings which covers approximately one acre of land with delivery available for \$5 per 100 seedlings

For those landowners interested in planting a smaller area, the State Forest Nursery offers a “Create-A-Wildlife” packet of 200 seedlings of up to 4 different tree or shrub species of your choice for \$90 plus \$10 direct shipping to your door.

To order conservation seedlings or the Create-A-Wildlife Packet contact the State Forest Nursery at Ames at 1-800-865-2477 or go on line to www.iowadnr.com/forestry/.

For more information, contact Walkowiak at 515-242-5966 or by e-mail at john.walkowiak@dnr.state.ia.us

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